SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Let us pass it without discussion because it is a constitutional requirement. Let us pass it without discussion.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Mr. Vice Chairman, Sir, looking at the consensus amongst the whole House and looking to the problems that may arise out of the U.P. Budget, my party has no objection. The financial business should be disposed of as far as U.P. is concerned.

THE UTTAR PRADESH APPROPRIATION (VOTE ON ACCOUNT) BILL, 1997

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, I move:

That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Uttar Pradesh for the services of a part of the financial year 1997-98, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 and 3 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I move:

That the Bill be returned.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE UTTAR PRADESH APPROPRIATION BILL, 1997.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, I move:

That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Uttar Pradesh for the services of the financial year 1996-97, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): We shall not take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 and 3 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I move:

That the Bill be returned.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Now, we will take up clarifications on the statement made by the Minister regarding...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Bihar): What about Uttar Pradesh? ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM: I will go by the Order Paper. In the Order Paper as well as in the BAC, it was decided that we will take up both the Resolution and the Appropriation Bill together. Then, Mr. Chidambaram said that the Appropriation Bill has to be passed. Therefore, we took it up after taking the sense of the House. If the Home Minister wants to say something, that is another thing, but I cannot direct him to say something. At this moment, I don't think it is appropriate to ask the Home Minister to make any statement on this.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): If he has something to say, he can say.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Now, we will take up clarifications on the statement made by the Minister regarding the New Exploration Licensing Policy.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL (Rajasthan): Is that the last item?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Yes. Now, Mr. John F. Fernandes.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, please clarify one thing, whether we are taking up the Proclamation today.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): We are not taking up the Proclamation today.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Are we seeking clarifications only?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Yes, we are taking up clarifications on the statement made by the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Sir, this is a very serious issue. We can have clarifications, but I think, a proper structured discussion on this policy document is very necessary. If the Government agrees, in the second half of the Budget Session, we can have that structured discussion because it is a serious thing. We never have a discussion on hydro-carbon policy in this country.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Okay, Mr. Basu.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: It is not a discussion. It is clarification.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM) : If everybody agrees, then the BAC can take a decision...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Sir, Mr. Nilotpal Basu is perfectly right in saying that the petroleum sector reforms are very important to be discussed in this House.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Now, we take up clarifications. Shri John F. Fernandes.

CLARIFICATIONS ON STATEMENT BY MINISTER—NEW EXPLORATION LICENSING POLICY (NELP)

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (Goa): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the statment of the hon. Minister is pursuant to the commitment made by the Finance Minister in paragraph 28 of his Budget Speech. Sir, we have seen that the growth rate is about eight per cent per annum, and there is no attempt on the part of the Government to discourage its consumption in the country. Sir, the hon. Minister is going to bring the public sector undertakings—ONGC and OIL—on a par with the private sector. They are going to withdraw. I think, Renukaji...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (Andhra Pradesh) : You people are not techno-friendly.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: You are disturbing me; you are distracting me by your voice...*(Interruptions)*... So, what I was trying to say is that for the first time, by this policy, the Government is going to have a level-playing field for the public sector undertakings and the private sector and also the joint sector because ONGC and OIL will also have joint sector with private sector in the country and also multinationals from abroad. Sir, the Government has also given a lot of tax rebates. Now, the Government wishes to give 50 per cent concession for seven years and also they will give a tax holiday for five years. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he will assure this house that they will have a scheme to see that this tax concession and tax holiday is passed on to the consumer.

Secondly, now we are going to give our oilfields to the private sector. The public sector has invested crores of rupees for feasibility reports and for testing. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether this investment incurred will be absorbed by the Government or they are going to pass it on the private sector, wherever